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Date: 8/27

Attention: Izumi Aizu

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 # Of Pages: 8 **(including Cover Page)**

From: Stephanie Leonard

If all the pages have NOT been received or if you have any questions please call (415) 332-1716

Message: Izumi --

Here is some background information on Cyberthon. I have also started a topic on the event in the VR conference on the WELL.

I will get you information on the Electronic Cafe quickly -- thank you!

Sent: 8/27/90

CYBERTHON
A 24-Hour Adventure In Virtual Reality

What Is Cyberthon?

Cyberthon is the name of an event the Whole Earth Institute is hosting for 24 hours from noon on October 6th to noon on October 7th, 1990 at Colossal Pictures in San Francisco. This event will focus on the cultural and social impact of Virtual Reality.

What is Virtual Reality?

According to Howard Rheingold, author of Tools for Thought, "Virtual Reality is the name for a new science and technology that is emerging worldwide. Head-mounted visual displays create the illusion of immersion in a computer simulated world, and special sensor-equipped gloves makes it possible to manipulate simulated objects by direct contact. Head-tracking devices enable the computer to update the world model, thus making it possible to navigate and explore the three-dimensional models known as virtual worlds. The technology already is used for scientific visualization, architectural design, and medical imaging. Future uses include advanced computer interfaces and communication technologies. Research is actively moving forward at NASA, the University of North Carolina, MIT and MIT Media Lab, and scores of other sites in the U.S., Japan and Europe."

How will Cyberthon be different from other Virtual Reality Conferences?

As stated above, Cyberthon will focus not on the technological advances in this field, but on the cultural and social impact of Virtual Reality. People from diverse backgrounds will get some hands-on experience with various forms of Virtual Reality and then be given the opportunity to think of how this innovative technology may impact their lives and culture in the foreseeable future.

Is this going to be a 24-hour conference?

This conference will run for 24 hours from Saturday October 6th to Sunday October 7th at the Colossal Pictures studios in San Francisco. Adding to the general ambience of virtual reality, the conference will follow a "Club Med" format -- e.g. once a visitor has paid his/her admission price no other exchange of money will occur.

To effectively, and magically, combine hands-on-demonstrations of Virtual Reality as it exists now with discussions on what turns it might take, activity will take place in two distinct areas throughout the 24 hour period. One of these areas will be a maze where real and virtual worlds are intertwined and the other space where speeches, group discussions and activities will be scheduled throughout.

What kind of things are going to happen in the maze?

A partial list of the activities the visitor will encounter, and can partake in or just watch, throughout the maze includes the following:

- hands-on experience with VPL, Autodesk and/or Sense8 equipment
- demonstrations of other novel V.R.-related technology such as those created by Michael Naimark and Chris Hardman
- entertainment by magicians, storytellers and other live performers
- films and videos about, and using, V.R.
- an opportunity to actually "build" a world (and maybe win a contest)
- innovative V.R. games which can be played to your heart's content

What kind of things are going to happen in the other area?

In the smaller area key speakers will talk about different aspects and applications of V.R., there will be group discussions and also group activities. A preliminary schedule for this area, which will change as our participant list grows. is as follows:

1:30 p.m.	Keynote Address (possibly by Dr. Marvin Minsky)
3:30 p.m.	The Human Interface - by Wendy Kellogg
5:30 p.m.	Industrial applications of V.R.
7:30 p.m.	Tactile Feedback Forum
9:00 p.m.	Discussion on the Social & Cultural Implications of V.R. (moderated by Howard Rheingold)
10:30 p.m.	Discussion on the Social & Cultural Implications of V.R. - Part 2
midnight	Jaron Lanier meets the Critics
2:00 a.m.	Live Performance (perhaps Penn & Teller)
4:00 a.m.	Live Group Experience (possibly an Antenna Theater audio tour)
6:00 a.m.	Live Group Experience - part 2
8:00 a.m.	Observations from V.R. Drama Experiment by Brenda Laurel
11:00 a.m.	Closing Address and presentation of the "Build Your Own World" contest awards

Who is going to participate in this event?

As of now Jaron Lanier, Eric Gullichsen, Margaret Minsky, Chris Hardman, Michael Naimark, Wendy Kellogg, William and Meredith Bricken, Tom Furness, VPL Research, Autodesk, Sense8, Broderbund, and Antenna Theater have already committed to participating in the event. Marvin Minksy, Max Behensky, Randy Farmer, Steve Arnold, Warren Franklin, Lucas Films, Scott Foster, Beth Wenzel, Steven Beck, Louis Brill, Brenda Laurel, Kathelin Hoffman and Stephanie Sutton have all expressed a strong interest in doing likewise.

The Cyberthon Steering Committee has compiled a comprehensive list of people and companies who are going to be invited to participate (see attached list). While some of these are indeed involved with Virtual Reality -- like Dr. Marvin Minsky of the Media Lab, Warren Robinett of UNC and Tom Furness of the University of Washington -- others are being asked because they are involved with creating alternative realities -- like story tellers, magicians and actors -- or because of their interest in V R and how it can affect their future.

Who are you inviting as guests?

As stated above, Cyberthon will focus on the cultural and social impact of Virtual Reality. Much like computers, this technology promises to affect the lives and work of many of us in the future, and for this reason we are inviting many non-technical individuals to attend.

Various areas of interest and endeavor we would like to see represented are: anthropologists, artists, biologists, educators, environmentalists, musicians, politicians, philosophers, photographers, poets, psychologists, social critics, and writers.

To get a well-rounded audience for discussions, it is important to make sure the attendees are diversified in interest and occupations, not just an event for the affluent, middle aged hacker.

How many people are you inviting?

To give everyone a chance to get as much hands-on experience with the technology, and to ensure that we have a mixture of different types of people, we are limiting the number of guests. Originally the number of guests had been limited to two hundred, but because of the large size of the studios donated to us by Colossal Pictures for this event and because of financial needs, this number is being reanalyzed.

How much will Cyberthon cost?

Although Colossal Pictures is generously donating the space, props, sets and some valuable management time, an initial estimate of the cost of putting on Cyberthon was made at $100,000.00. This figure incorporates pre-event office costs as well as those related to both Cyberthon and its participants.

In addition to these costs, we would like to be able to extend some free, or discounted, tickets to people who can't afford the ticket but would add to the diversity of the attendees. For example, educators, clergy and anthropologists might choose not to attend this event because of the price but their presence could add a great deal.

If only 200 paying guests were allowed in, at $250.00 each, Whole Earth Institute would have to come up with an additional $50,000 + to cover its costs. As a non-profit organization with limited funds, WEI knows it has to look for other ways to raise the additional money.

How will Whole Earth Institute raise additional funds?

The Steering Committee is analyzing the financial dilemma and will embark on two-fold line of action. First, as mentioned above, the actual number of paying guests could be increased. Doubling the number of paying guests to 400, for example, would help meet a large part of the cost. Also this increase, in the large space, could actually enhance the total experience.

At the same time members of the Steering Committee will be appealing to corporations for donations. These donations will help Whole Earth Institute meet its expenses and, hopefully, allow us to grant a limited number of scholarships to people who can't afford the ticket price but would add to the event.

What will Corporate Sponsors get for their donations?

Every Cyberthon Sponsor will be cited in all publicity surrounding the event, receive a set number of invitations to the Friday night Preview Party and be entitled to send a set number of people to Cyberthon itself.

Where will the proceeds of Cyberthon go?

Should there be any money left over after all expenses, these will go back to the host organization, Whole Earth Institute. The Institute is the Research & Development arm of POINT Foundation, a 501 c 3 non-profit organization which has brought you the *Whole Earth Catalogs* for the past twenty plus years.

Whole Earth Institute is constantly investigating innovative ways to give people access to tools, ideas and communities. Cyberthon is certainly an event which does this, and hopefully there will be some profit from it which can be used to seed other projects.

Are there other, non-financial, donations which could help cut costs?

Certainly our costs will be cut if we receive some things as donations or loans instead of having to buy or rent them. Among the items we can use are:

MAC IIs -- to be used in the "Build Your Own World" contest
Contest prizes
Video Monitors
Video equipment and tape
Camera equipment and film
Tape recorders
Walkie Talkies
MACs for general event coordination
Cots -- for the nap room
Lodging for participants
Cyberthon T-Shirts / Sweatshirts / Pens...

Where can I get more information on Cyberthon?

If you have questions about Cyberthon, or want an update on Participants, you can call the Whole Earth Institute office at (415) 332-1716 Monday through Friday or email "tiffy" or "cnash" on the WELL.

!!!!!!!!!! Cyberthon Update !!!!!!!!!!

*** Invitations ***

To date we have sent out 624 invitations (92 of which have gone to presenters, guests and/or volunteers). We have 40 paid responses, including Bill Gibson and Bruce Sterling, and several others have expressed interest even though their checks have not reached us.

As we have increased our target number from 200 paying guests to 400, we are definitely looking for more names **and** addresses so keep them coming.

*** Presenters ***

VPL, Autodesk, Sense8, Broderbund, Antenna Theater, William and Meredith Bricken, Margaret Minsky, Tom Furness, Jaron Lanier, Michael Naimark, Scott Foster, Beth Wenzel, Wendy Kellogg, Louis Brill, Brenda Laurel and Eric Gullichsen have definitely agreed to participate in Cyberthon.

As detailed in the attached report, Marvin Minsky, Max Behensky, Scott Fisher, Steve Arnold (of Lucas Films), Randy Farmer, and SimGraphics are among those who have expressed interest in being part of Cyberthon but details need to be worked out.

*** Committee Heads ***

Certain coordinator tasks have been identified as requiring strong individuals and we have been endeavoring to fill these spots as quickly as possible with well-qualified volunteers.

These spots are:

Build The World Coordinator	-- Danica Remy
Colossal Films Coordinator	-- Roberta Gelt
Computer Coordinator	-- Chris Thormon
Documentation Coordinator	-- (Still Looking)
Documentation Liaison	-- Larry Shaw
Health Care Coordinator	-- Flash Gordon, M.D.
Stage Manager	-- Charlie Swanson
Technical Coordinator	-- Bob Bickford
Volunteer Coordinator	-- Susan Rosberg

*** Volunteers ***

Cyberthon is going to be a BIG event both in content and manpower needs, so we are going to need many volunteers both before and at the event.

Before the event, we will need folks to do the following:

Answer phones at the office and at Colossal the week before Cyberthon
Be "on call" to do odd jobs
Build Worlds on the MACs and learn how to help others
Do data entry
Sign painters - banner makers
Stuff and fold

At the event we will need at least the following:

Garbage Detail (to make our space virtually spotless)
General go-fers
Internal security workers
Registration/information booth workers
Set Up / Take Down help

Volunteers who wish to work at least ten (10) hours on some of these tasks in return for gaining free admission, should call Susan Rosberg at the Whole Earth Office or e-mail her (susan on the WELL). Volunteers who wish to get involved with World Building should call Danica Remy at 381-4039 or e-mail her (remy on the WELL).

We are asking volunteers who work before the event and wish to come to the event to try and come between midnight and 8:00 a.m. when we feel there will be some fall out of paying guests.

*** Documentation ***

As Cyberthon is a multi-media event, so it will be documented in many forms and POINT will retain all rights to this documentation.

In filming the event three separate avenues have been mentioned as possibilities: 1) Michael Starks, of 3D-TV, might video some of the proceedings as seen from the virtual eye (inside the goggles) using his three-dimensional photographic equipment, 2) a professional camera crew, like David Kennard's, might opt to video the event on spec, and/or 3) people attending Cyberthon might be able to borrow video camcorders and shoot parts of the event as they see it.

In print, tape recordings and still photography we are going to ask folks to register with us and give us a copy of what ever they record. These will be cataloged in the POINT offices to be used in the future, whether as a multi-media piece or in some other form not presently conceived.

*** Sponsors ***

Although we have had little success to date coming up with corporate sponsorship, a second letter of appeal has gone out outlining our specific needs.

In return for the Sponsor's support we can promise prominent placement in all Press and Publicity that goes out and one (1) space at a special Preview Party for every one-thousand dollars donated.

In addition we offer a Sponsor the following number of spaces to Cyberthon itself:

1 Space for a contribution of $ 1,000 to $3,000
2 Spaces for a contribution of $3,001 to $5,000
3 Spaces for a contribution of $5,001 to $7,500
4 Spaces for a contribution of $7,501 to $9,000
5 Spaces for a contribution of $9,001 to $12,500

New companies which have been approached with this appeal are NEC, Pony Canyon, Fujitsu, Sega, Sharp and Silicon Graphics. Other suggestions of folks we could approach for the above, or for underwriting the Preview Party, are appreciated.

*** Other Needs ***

To help cut costs, we are still looking for donations of the following:

Build Your Own World Contest prizes
Camera equipment and film
Cots/futons -- for the nap room
Cyberthon T-Shirts / Sweatshirts / Pens / Baseball caps
Lodging for participants
MAC IIs -- to be used in the "Build Your Own World" contest
MACs for general event coordination
Tape recorders
Video equipment and tape
Video Monitors
Walkie Talkies

*** Time Table ***

To help coordinate all of our efforts, the following is a list of significant dates which should be kept in mind:

Aug. 15th	-- Price Warning postcard goes out (Price goes up to $350 on 9/1) Preliminary Budget evaluation
Aug. 21st	-- All Presenters should be confirmed
Aug. 22nd	-- Maze Building meeting at Colossal (tentative)
Aug. 27th	-- Reservation Packets go out to paid guests
Sept. 5th	-- Budget evaluation
Oct. 2nd	-- Set-Up begins at Colossal
Oct. 4th	-- All Committee Heads meet at the site
Oct. 5th	-- Presenters start setting up (7:00 a.m.) Preview Party - 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.)
Oct. 6th	-- Noon, it starts!
Oct. 7th	-- The End // Take down
Nov. 1st	-- Evaluation meeting